

LAC
1/23/04

Protein/(Poly)peptide Libraries

filed 18 February 1998

LAC
This application is a divisional of 09/025,769^A, now US 6,300,064, which
Field of the Invention is a continuation of PCT EP96/03647 filed 19 AUGUST 1996.

The present invention relates to synthetic DNA sequences which encode one or more collections of homologous proteins/(poly)peptides, and methods for generating and applying libraries of these DNA sequences. In particular, the invention relates to the preparation of a library of human-derived antibody genes by the use of synthetic consensus sequences which cover the structural repertoire of antibodies encoded in the human genome. Furthermore, the invention relates to the use of a single consensus antibody gene as a universal framework for highly diverse antibody libraries.

Background to the Invention

All current recombinant methods which use libraries of proteins/(poly)peptides, e.g. antibodies, to screen for members with desired properties, e.g. binding a given ligand, do not provide the possibility to improve the desired properties of the members in an easy and rapid manner. Usually a library is created either by inserting a random oligonucleotide sequence into one or more DNA sequences cloned from an organism, or a family of DNA sequences is cloned and used as the library. The library is then screened, e.g. using phage display, for members which show the desired property. The sequences of one or more of these resulting molecules are then determined. There is no general procedure available to improve these molecules further on.

Winter (EP 0 368 684 B1) has provided a method for amplifying (by PCR), cloning, and expressing antibody variable region genes. Starting with these genes he was able to create libraries of functional antibody fragments by randomizing the CDR3 of the heavy and/or the light chain. This process is functionally equivalent to the natural process of VJ and VDJ recombination which occurs during the development of B-cells in the immune system.

However the Winter invention does not provide a method for optimizing the binding affinities of antibody fragments further on, a process which would be functionally equivalent to the naturally occurring phenomenon of "affinity maturation", which is provided by the present invention. Furthermore, the Winter invention does not provide for artificial variable region genes, which represent a whole family of